

September 11, 2002

Lintgram NNSA#2

On December 8, 1941, after another surprise attack on the United States, President Franklin Roosevelt spoke of "a date that will live in infamy." One year ago today - September 11, 2001 - we had another date that will live in infamy. While we were fortunate in not losing anyone from the NNSA family, many of us, including me, lost friends, family, or colleagues in New York or at the Pentagon. All of us lost fellow citizens. Those citizens died for their country, just as surely as those killed on the battlefields of Korea or Vietnam or Afghanistan.

Today is a day of remembrance, a day to mourn and honor those who perished. So, as the Secretary has requested, we will observe a moment of silence at 9:37, the time of the attack on the Pentagon. We will think about where we were one year ago today. Tonight we will watch television accounts of the events of last year. We will hear tributes and speeches. All of this is appropriate. The past shapes who we are and we must not forget the past.

But while we must not forget the past, we must not focus exclusively on the horrors of September 11. We must also understand how much we have accomplished and focus on where, together, we must go. A year ago, General Gordon challenged us to do three things: continue our mission, protect the complex, and offer our talents and abilities in the broader fight against terrorism. Together you have accomplished those things. You have kept the stockpile reliable, advanced science, fostered nonproliferation. You have made substantial improvements in security throughout NNSA. You have provided your knowledge and your experience to other departments and will soon transfer some of that knowledge and experience to the new Department of Homeland Security. General Gordon would be very proud of what you have accomplished over the past year. So am I.

Now, as we stop to remember the past and pay tribute to those who died, we must also look to the future. Together, we must build on what we have accomplished this past year. We must continue to meet the important security responsibilities that have been entrusted to us. We must continue to keep the complex safe from harm. We must continue to offer the cutting-edge technology and the professional competence of NNSA to the new, demanding missions of Homeland Security.

But we must do more. Simply put, we must preserve the confidence and optimism that have always been one of the greatest strengths of the American people.

So I hope today you will pause to honor those who were killed and to mourn their passing. I hope you will pause to be inspired again by the courage of firefighters trudging up the steps of a doomed building, or of ordinary people who repeatedly entered the Pentagon to help others find their way out, or of a collection of average citizens who took control of Flight 93 and prevented a horrible day from becoming even worse. But I also hope you will draw from this day a new determination to face the future with confidence. Nothing is more certain than that a confident and free American people will ultimately prevail in the struggle against evil.

On this solemn anniversary I send my sympathies to those of you who are remembering lost friends and relatives. I send my admiration to you for the job you have done this past year. But most of all, I send my determination to work with you to face our future challenges unafraid.

Almost two hundred years ago, an American stood on the deck of a British warship. Peering through the dark, he sought to determine if the United States had prevailed in battle. He recorded his question in these words:

Oh, say, does that Star-Spangled Banner yet wave,
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave?

Thanks to all of you and your comrades throughout America, it still does and always will. God bless you all and God bless America.

Linton Brooks

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